

Stephen Friedman Gallery

Wallpaper*

Holly Hendry wins inaugural Experimental Architecture Arts Foundation Award

Jonathan Bell

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Image: Holly Hendry won the first Experimental Architecture award at the Arts Foundation Awards 2019

The Arts Foundation announced its very first award for Experimental Architecture at a ceremony at the ICA last night. The Foundation was set up in 1993 as a charity to support all facets of artistic production, from animation to literature, photography to product design and painting. This year marks the debut of Experimental Architecture as a category, reflecting

the many ways in which spatial design now manifests itself, from physical spaces to virtual ones.

Holly Hendry won the debut award, beating her fellow finalists Chris Hildrey, Lawrence Lek and Public Practice. The winner was chosen from a long list by a judging panel of professionals, including the architect Amanda Levete, writer and curator Justin McGuirk and Theodore Spyropoulos, director of the Architectural Association's Design Research Lab.



Image: Cenotaph, 2018, by Holly Hendry, installation view at Exchange Flags. Photography Thierry Bal

Hendry's work reflected one of the jury's main concerns – that experimental architecture has evolved far beyond the 'paper architecture' and theorising of the 1960s, 70s and 80s. Today, opportunities abound, from installations real and virtual to built spaces, research projects and sculptures. Hendry's fellow finalists included the computer graphic specialist Lawrence

Lek, with his explorations of virtual spaces, and Public Practice, a collective set up by Pooja Agrawal and Finn Williams to crunch the data and connections that link the public sector to design. Inspired by the visionary and forward-thinking social architecture of the post-war era, Public Practice want to empower those on both sides of the relationship, helping councils make progressive choices and urging their residents to demand them.

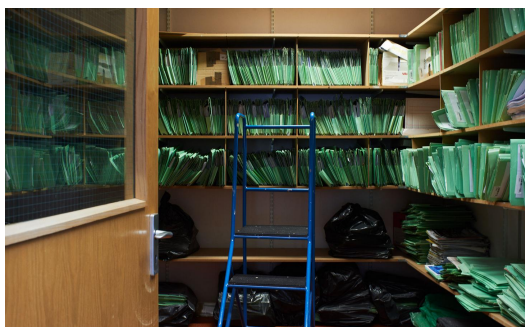


Image: Public Practice was a fellow finalist, the aim of this collective practice is to crunch the data and connections that link the public sector to design. Photography: Tim Smyth

Finally, there was the work of Chris Hildrey, an architect who used his year as Designer in Residence at London's Design Museum to create ProxyAddress, an ongoing project that pairs homeless people with permanent addresses, rooting them within the system to help them get back on their feet.

Ultimately, Henry's abstract, unusual sculptures won the day. Her work uses architectural elements like ducts and pipes, but plays with scale, form and location to create strange, abstract shapes that might or might not be part of a building. Part architecture, part art, this is work that blurs boundaries, setting the tone for further exploration of contemporary architecture's wilder shores.